

# USDAnews

USDA's Employee News Publication—For You & About You!

## We Honor Our Award-Winning USDA Achievers

by Charlene Baker  
RD Human Resources Staff

USDA honored a number of its employees, for their outstanding achievements, at its 56th Annual Honor Awards Ceremony, which took place July 8 at the Ronald Reagan International Trade Center in Washington, DC.

**Sandra Anglade**, USDA's Employee Recognition Program Manager with the Office of Human Resources Management and coordinator of the Ceremony, said that USDA honor awards were awarded to 88 recipients, including 29 individuals and 59 groups.

120 nominations, which included 33 individuals and 87 groups, had been submitted earlier to the USDA Honor Awards Evaluation Committee. That group, chaired for the second year in a row by **Sherie Hinton Henry**, deputy administrator for operations and management in the Rural Development mission area, was composed of Henry and five individuals selected from agriculture, journalism, academia, and the private, non-profit sector. The six-member Committee reviewed those nominations in April and had then made its recommendations to Secretary **Ann M. Veneman**.

At the ceremony Veneman delivered the keynote address and then presented the major USDA awards to the employees. In her

remarks she said that "This past year, particularly following the tragedies of September 11, we saw many examples where USDA employees stepped forward to help their fellow Americans. These honorees, and all those recognized through this awards program, represent just a small fraction of the many dedicated and hard-working employees at USDA."

**Cecilia Matthews**, USDA's Incentive Awards Program Manager with OHRM, said that the highest USDA honor awards are the Plow Awards. One individual and three groups received Plow Awards this year. Those recipients have that particular annotation by their respective names in the lists that follow.

In addition to the 88 USDA honor award presentations, USDA's awards program noted the Department's 16 Presidential Rank Award recipients for 2001, the USDA recipients of major awards sponsored by external organizations, and the 456 Departmental employees across the country who have 40 or more years of federal service. Of those, eight have 50 or more years of federal service. In addition, for at least the second year in a row, the USDA employee with the longest years of federal service is reported to be **Harold "Bruno" Mangum**, currently a program specialist with the Farm Service Agency's state office in Raleigh, N.C., who has 66 years of federal service, all with USDA.

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"Visitors keep coming by to take advantage of our ARS 'body fat analysis,'" affirms ARS Associate Deputy Administrator **Judy St. John** (2nd from right). She and **Dawn Riley** (right), director of legislative and intergovernmental affairs for the research, education, and economics mission area, confer in front of the REE booth which focuses on USDA's nutrition research programs—while ARS Acting Associate Administrator **Caird Rexroad** (reaching, right) smooths out the booth's banner. In the meantime, an apple-munching youngster (foreground) stops by to check out the exhibit's offerings. This was one of a number of USDA exhibits and booths which were part of the Department's recent participation in President **George W. Bush's** "HealthierUS Initiative." Note the story below.—

PHOTO BY DEMETRIA FLETCHER

## At USDA, We're Part Of A "HealthierUS" Including Body Fat Measures, Power Panther, & "Nike US"

by Ron Hall  
Office of Communications

At USDA, we're into healthy lifestyles, proper eating, and physical activity. We promote that among our employees, and we promote that to our customers: the general public. We recently had yet another opportunity to advance that message by participating in President **George W. Bush's** "HealthierUS Initiative."

According to **Beth Johnson**, USDA senior advisor on food and

nutrition issues, the Department's nutrition, health, and outdoor recreation programs were highlighted on June 20 at a kickoff for the HealthierUS Initiative, which included a "Fitness Expo," held on the grounds of the White House. Then two days later on June 22 Secretary **Ann M. Veneman** participated in a "Fitness Challenge" which included a 1.5 mile walk at Fort McNair, on the banks of the Potomac River in Washington, DC.

Johnson explained that the HealthierUS Initiative uses the resources of the federal government—including those at USDA—to alert Americans to the vital health benefits that can come from

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# Ann M. Veneman

## *Secretary of Agriculture*

**D**uring the month of September, people from all around the world have joined America in not only remembering the tragic events of September 11, but paying tribute to those who lost their lives

and to the many heroes who were born in its aftermath. On that tragic day, families were lost. People of all races, religions, and backgrounds, even within our own USDA family, were victims of hatred. Through cowardly acts, the terrorists thought they could weaken our nation, but we proved them wrong. Americans have responded as we often do with a spirit of renewal and through selfless acts of kindness and compassion.

We have shown that bigotry and hatred have no place in society. And that a nation committed to good, to neighbor helping neighbor, can overcome any challenge. This is one reason why President **George W. Bush** has called on all Americans to recognize this month as a "September of Service." As he has said, "When people help each other, our entire nation benefits."

USDA employees have a long history of helping others. And this month, many of you will once again demonstrate that spirit of giving by participating in the Combined Federal Campaign. Each year thousands of employees assist in this worthwhile cause that teams up federal agencies with local charities through payroll deductions and donations. This year, President Bush has asked me to serve as chair, and we have set high goals, to demonstrate our dedication to public service, not only on the job, but in our communities as well.

This past year, our nation has shown the world our resolve and strength. We have shown that through faith in God we will always be bound together. And, that our belief in freedom and respect for humankind will forever keep America united and our world a safer place to live.

There are so many ways we can all serve. Whether mentoring a child, lending a hand to someone in need, serving as a USA Freedom Corps volunteer, or providing a donation to a charitable organization, we can all make our nation stronger by making a difference in our communities. ■

### A "HealthierUS"...continued from pg. 1

simple and modest improvements in nutrition, physical activity, and behavior. "Research has shown that improving overall health—and thereby preventing disease and premature death—is as easy as making small adjustments and improvements in the activities of one's daily life," she noted.

USDA employees exhibited information on physical fitness, nutrition, health-based preventive screenings, and making healthy choices at both events. For instance, **Carole Davis**, director of the Nutrition Promotion Staff in the Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion, said staff from CNPP and the Food and Nutrition Service offered materials on a healthy diet.

"We had displays of our Dietary Guidelines for Americans, the Food Guide Pyramid, the Healthy Eating Index, nutrition education programs, and portion control information," said CNPP nutritionist **David Herring**.

CNPP nutritionist **Shirley Gerrior** added that they also provided visitors to their booth with information about its on-line tool—the Interactive Healthy Eating Index—designed to assess the quality of their diet. "In 2001 over 200,000 Americans evaluated their diets on-line," said CNPP nutritionist **Wen Yen Juan**.

**Lori French**, chief of the Nutrition Promotion and Training Branch in FNS, said that at yet another booth she and her FNS colleagues were promoting "Team Nutrition." "That's a USDA nutrition initiative designed to encourage school-age children to eat healthy and be physically active," she explained. **Vicky Urcuyo**, head of the Team Nutrition Section in that Branch, noted that USDA's "Team Nutrition" initiative began in 1995, "and we're encouraged about the visibility that this particular forum provided us to advance our message."

**Judy Wilson**, director of FNS's Nutrition Services Staff, said that USDA also featured information on its "Eat Smart, Play Hard" national healthy eating and physical activity campaign. FNS supervisory nutritionist **Marion Hinnners** noted that the spokesperson for that campaign is USDA's "Power Panther"—who attended both events. "Power Panther, a blue panther who wears a T-shirt displaying the Food Guide Pyramid, delivers nutrition and physical activity messages, especially to children, in a fun and non-threatening way," added FNS senior nutritionist **Jane Mandell**.

**Susan Welsh**, CSREES's national program leader for nutrition education research, said that staffers from the Agricultural Research Service, CSREES,

and the Economic Research Service put together nutrition research information that, in turn, was provided to the White House for the President's Policy Book on this initiative. "At our Research, Education, and Economics mission area booth," recounted ARS Associate Deputy Administrator **Judy St. John**, "we offered information on USDA's nutrition research programs."

ARS research scientist **Kay Behall** added that she was one of the staffers who used an instrument that relies on near-infrared light to measure body fat content on those persons visiting that booth who wished to have it done. "We then gave each participant a computer printout which reflected that individual's body fat measure and the resulting calculations of his/her lean body mass and body mass index," said ARS support scientist **Dan Scholfield**.

Forest Service resource analyst **Jamie Schwartz** staffed his agency's booth. To encourage outdoor recreation on FS-administered lands, the exhibit included creative exhortations such as "Hike US," "Bike US," "Ski US," "Camp US," "Fish US," "Float US," "Tour US," and otherwise "Discover US." FS staffers exhibited information on various physical fitness activities that individuals can participate in when visiting any of the nation's 155 national forests or 22 national grasslands around the country.

"We manage more than 133,000 miles of trails and 23,000 developed recreational sites," Schwartz pointed out. "They provide visitors with opportunities to walk, hike, hold gatherings for families and friends, view wildlife, and visit heritage sites and nature centers."

FS program manager for interpretive services **Kristen Nelson** noted that on June 19 FS and CNPP entered into a multi-agency partnership, with such federal agencies as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Army Corps of Engineers, to promote public health and recreation, which includes enhancing access to and availability of trails and recreational facilities on public lands.

"As part of that Memo of Understanding, we're also promoting such activities as National Trails Day and National Fishing and Boating Week—generally held on public lands," she said. "Those events encourage people to be active outdoors, while they can also participate in such public services as tree plantings and maintaining trails."

"From our nutrition programs to encouraging fitness on national forest trails," said Secretary **Ann M. Veneman**, "USDA is helping achieve a healthier America through innovative programs and partnerships." ■

## Veneman Honors Summer Interns At USDA Ceremony

by Patricia Klintberg  
Office of Communications

One month to the day after USDA's 56th Annual Honor Awards Ceremony, Secretary **Ann M. Veneman** took time out to honor USDA's summer interns and talk about the diverse opportunities for employment at USDA. Nationally, USDA employs about 9,500 student interns each year.

At the August 8 ceremony held in the Jefferson Auditorium at USDA's South Building in Washington, DC, Veneman heard from three Washington, DC-based interns and one former intern who is now a full-time employee.

**Melinda Collier**, who began as an intern in 1994, now works for the Rural Housing Service. A former USDA 1890 National Scholar, Collier, who now holds a Master of Public Administration degree from Syracuse University, said, "I've had other job offers. But I stay because I'm part of a great team that makes a difference in the lives of rural Americans across this nation every day."

**Estavan Ramirez**, a third year political science major at the University of California-Berkeley, said of his experience working with the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, "I can

definitely see myself having a career in agriculture--it's just so broad and so huge--from when you eat a grape to the whole forest." Ramirez came to USDA through the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) Internship Program.

Washington Internship for Native Students (WINS) Program intern, **Jasper Sage**, is a senior at Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kan. He worked with the Farm Service Agency this year and said he was impressed with FSA's emphasis on culture. "They look at the law and see how can we introduce these programs without disturbing [the tribal government's] heritage, their culture, their spiritual values, and all the sacred places," he said. "Right now they're using local people to implement these programs, and that's what I liked about it."

Office of Communications intern **Katy Poth**, a senior at Ohio State University, is a former national officer of the FFA. "When I came I wasn't sure exactly what to expect, but I soon found out that the Office of Communications is an extremely wide arena. I've been able to sit in on the morning meetings and listen to the same issues be discussed around this conference table that I was used to being discussed around the dinner table back on my farm. To see the care and concern is something that makes me very proud to call back home and tell my dad about what's



Secretary **Ann M. Veneman** (center) speaks to USDA interns in Washington, DC at a recent ceremony. Four participants in USDA's intern program who are standing behind her are (L to R) **Estavan Ramirez**, **Jasper Sage**, **Melinda Collier**, and **Katy Poth**.—PHOTO BY KEN HAMMOND

happening at the USDA."

Veneman expanded on the interns' theme about the diverse missions of USDA. "Many people don't recognize it, but this is one of the most diverse Departments in all of the U.S. government," she said.

"I know that when I go around the country, people think we just deal with farmers, or they might just know that we stamp meat packages because they see that USDA label in their grocery store. But the fact of the matter is, in addition to all the farm programs and the conservation programs, we're responsible for food safety in the area of meat and poultry inspection. We run the Food Stamp Program, the School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast

Program, and the Women, Infants, and Children Program. We have rural development programs, helping rural communities all around the country with infrastructure. We run the Forest Service, and we have a tremendous number of programs in education, research, and economics," Veneman said.

"What you have from all of this diversity in our Department is a diversity of opportunity for employment," Veneman urged the interns "to not only consider a career that may be related to agriculture or the environmental issues that we deal with, or the nutrition education and nutrition opportunities, but to look very, very carefully at the possibility of a career in public service." ■

### Award-Winning USDA Achievers...continued from pg. 1

#### The 29 Individuals receiving USDA honor awards included:

For *Expanding Economic and Trade Opportunities for United States Agricultural Producers*: **Aubrey Davis** (National Agricultural Statistics Service), Concord, N.H.; **Owen Ecker** (Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration), Washington, DC; and **Eva Ripollone** (Foreign Agricultural Service), Washington, DC; For *Promoting Health by Providing Access to Safe, Affordable, and Nutritious Food*: **George Inglett** (Agricultural Research Service), Peoria, Ill.; **Gloria McAdam** (Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service and Foodshare of Greater Hartford), Windsor, Conn.; **Philipp Simon** (ARS), Madison, Wis.; and **Donald Thayer** (ARS), Wyndmoor, Pa.; For *Maintaining and Enhancing the Nation's Natural Resources and Environment*: **Linden Brooks** (Natural Resources Conservation Service), Red Bluff, Calif.; **Laurence Chandler** (ARS), Fargo, N.D.; **John Doran** (ARS), Lincoln, Neb.; **David Doss** (NRCS), Annapolis, Md.; **Dale Heermann** (ARS), Fort Collins, Colo.; **Susan Jacobson** (CSREES and the University of Florida), Gainesville, Fla.; **Patricia Leavenworth** (NRCS),

Madison, Wis.; **Deborah Jean Lodge** (Forest Service), Luquillo, Puerto Rico; **Michael McElhiney** (NRCS), Modesto, Calif.; and **Edwin Smith** (CSREES and the University of Nevada-Reno), Minden, Nev.; For *Enhancing the Capacity of all Rural Residents, Communities, and Businesses to Prosper*: **Gregory Henderson** (Office of Inspector General), Dallas, Texas; **Christine Humes** (Rural Business-Cooperative Service), Washington, DC; and **Kenneth Noonan** (NRCS), Lincoln, Neb.; For *Operating an Efficient, Effective, and Discrimination-Free Organization*: **Shirley Gammon** (NRCS), Bozeman, Mont.; **David Hoff** (U.S. Department of Justice, for Farm Service Agency), Urbana, Ill.; **Anne Rickman** (FSA), Boydton, Va.; **Rafael Sanchez** (NASS), Washington, DC; and **John Surina** (Office of the Secretary), Washington, DC; For *Heroism and Emergency Response*: **Rebecca Ann Welch** [Plow Award] (FS), Naches, Wash.; and **Wallace Young** (Food Safety and Inspection Service), San Francisco, Calif.; under subcategory of "Response to Attack on the Pentagon": **James Fortner** (FSA), Washington, DC; and **Jane Servais** (Agricultural Marketing Service), Washington, DC.

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**The 59 Groups—which include over 1,700 Group members—receiving USDA honor awards included:**

*For Expanding Economic and Trade Opportunities for United States Agricultural Producers:* the European Union Agricultural Specialists [Plow Award] (FAS), Washington, DC, **Melinda Sallyards**, Group Leader; the Farmers Market Team (AMS), Washington, DC, **Nichole Holley**, Group Leader; the Food and Agricultural Policy Report Team (Economic Research Service), Washington, DC, **Mary Bohman**, Group Leader; the Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute (CSREES and the University of Missouri), Columbia, Mo., **Abner Womack**, Group Leader; the GreenSeeker Sprayer Research Team (CSREES and the Oklahoma Agricultural Experiment Station), Stillwater, Okla., **John Solie**, Group Leader; the White Wheat Commercialization Team (ARS), Manhattan, Kan., **Donald Koeltzow**, Group Leader; the Marketing Assistance Project Team (CSREES), Washington, DC, **Timothy Grosser**, Group Leader; the Multistate Project Northeastern-501 (CSREES), Biglerville, Pa., **John Halbrendt**, Group Leader; and the Plant Epidemiology and Risk Analysis Laboratory (Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service), Raleigh, N.C., **Daniel Fieselmann**, Group Leader; *For Promoting Health by Providing Access to Safe, Affordable, and Nutritious Food:* the Bil Mar Foods, Incorporated, Investigation and Prosecution Team (OIG), East Lansing, Mich., **Thomas Ackerman**, Group Leader; the Fellows Working Group (FSIS), Washington, DC, **Tamar Lasky** and **Laurie Lindsay**, Group Leaders; the Food Safety and Inspection Administration Joint Enforcement Group (FSIS), Washington, DC, **Carlos Torres-Lopez** and **Paul Wolseley**, Group Leaders; the Grapevine Biotechnology Research Group (CSREES and the University of Florida), Apopka, Fla., **Dennis**

**Gray**, Group Leader; the Particle Film Research Team (ARS), Kearneysville, W.Va., **Michael Glenn** and **Gary Puterka**, Group Leaders; the Pathogen Detection and Enforcement Response Group (FSIS), Washington, DC, **James Sullivan** and **Accey Smith**, Group Leaders; the Prime Vendor Pilot Team (Food and Nutrition Service), Alexandria, Va., **David Seger**, Group Leader; and the Seniors Farmers Market Team (FNS), Alexandria, Va., **Diane Kriviski**, Group Leader; *For Maintaining and Enhancing the Nation's Natural Resources and Environment:* the 2002 Olympic Planning Team [Plow Award] (FS), Salt Lake City, Utah, **John Hoagland**, Group Leader; the Animal Disease Emergency Response Team (OIG), Chicago, Ill., **Edward Krivus**, Group Leader; the Deschutes National Forest Conservation Camp Team (FS), Bend, Ore., **Lynn Roby**, Group Leader; the Monarch Consortium Leaders (ARS), Ames, Iowa, **Richard Hellmich**, Group Leader; the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie and Wenatchee Forest Supervisors (FS), Wenatchee and Mount Lake Terrace, Wash., **Sonny O'Neal** and **John Phipps**, Group Leaders; the National Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative Steering Committee (NRCS), Davis, Okla., **Bob Drake** (National Cattlemen's Beef Association), Group Leader; the Poultry Waste Management Education Team (CSREES and Poultry Waste Management Education), Stillwater, Okla., **Doug Hamilton**, Group Leader; and the Storm Recovery Team (FS), Grand Marais, Minn., **Dennis Neitzke**, Group Leader; *For Enhancing the Capacity of all Rural Residents, Communities, and Businesses to Prosper:* the Community Facilities Team (Rural Housing Service), Washington, DC, **Chadwick Parker**, Group Leader; the Kentucky Rural Housing Service Working Group (RHS), Lexington, Ky., **Denver Parks**, Group Leader; the Money 2000 and Investing For Your Future Project Teams (CSREES and Rutgers Cooperative Extension), Newton, N.J., **Barbara**

**O'Neill**, Group Leader; the Rural Policy Research Institute (CSREES and the University of Missouri), Columbia, Mo., **Charles Fluharty**, Group Leader; and Team West Virginia (RHS), Morgantown, W.Va., **Dianne Cryslar**, Group Leader; *For Operating an Efficient, Effective, and Discrimination-Free Organization:* the Pigford Team [Plow Award] (ERS), Washington, DC, **Ronald Trostle**, Group Leader; the Apalachicola National Forest and Liberty Wilderness Crossroads Camp Partnership (FS), Bristol, Fla., **Andrew Colaninno**, Group Leader; the Automated Staffing and Application Program (FS), Boise, Idaho, **Joy Thomas**, Group Leader; the Civil Rights Division (Office of the General Counsel), Washington, DC, **Arlean Leland**, Group Leader; the Compliance Team (AMS), Washington, DC, **Barbara Schulke**, Group Leader; the Domestic Electronic Bid Entry System Development Team (AMS), Kansas City, Mo., **DeWayne Kalberg** (FSA), Group Leader; the Electronic Data Interchange Project Team (RHS), St. Louis, Mo., **Donna Chism**, Group Leader; El Servicio Noticiero (ARS), Beltsville, Md., **Sandy Miller Hays**, Group Leader; the Flood Hazard Determination Group (RHS), St. Louis, Mo., **Thomas Morris**, Group Leader; the Foundation Financial Information System Implementation Team (Office of the Chief Financial Officer), Washington, DC, **Wendy Snow**, Group Leader; the Information Technology Security Audit Team (OIG), Mission, Kan., **Steven Eckland**, Group Leader; the Integrated Accountability System (NRCS), Washington, DC, **Pearlie Reed**, Group Leader; the Ouachita National Forest Engineering and Contracting Team (FS), Hot Springs, Ark., **Beverly Allen** and **Gary Baber**, Group Leaders; and the Training and Development Center Developmental Team (AMS), Washington, DC, **Robert Huttenlocker**, Group Leader; *For Heroism and Emergency Response:* Foot-and-Mouth Disease in the United Kingdom (APHIS),

Riverdale, Md., **Joseph Anelli**, Group Leader; the Klamath Basin Emergency Watershed Protection Program (NRCS), Portland, Ore., **Robert Graham**, Group Leader; the Life Saving Effort (FSIS), Lawrence, Kan., and Rogers, Ark., **Michael Cook** and **Stanley Johnson**, Group Leaders; and the Pinecrest Fish Celebration Event Organizers (FS), Pinecrest, Calif., **David Martin**, Group Leader; under subcategory of "Response to Attack on the World Trade Center, Twin Towers:" the Alaska Area Type 1 Incident Management Team (FS), Anchorage, Alaska, **Joseph Stam** (State of Alaska), Group Leader; the Disaster Food Stamp Program Team (FNS), Boston Mass., **Frances Zorn**, Group Leader; the Northwest Area Type 1 Incident Management Team 2 (FS), Portland, Ore., **Mike Lohrey**, Group Leader; the Northwest Area Type 1 Incident Management Team 3 (FS) Redmond, Ore., **Joe Stutler**, Group Leader; the Southwest Area Type 1 Incident Management Team (FS), Flagstaff, Ariz., **Van Bateman**, Group Leader; the Terrorist Attacks Incident Response and Consequence Management Group (OIG), New York, N.Y., **Ellen Quackenbush**, Group Leader; and the Wildlife Services World Trade Center Disaster Response Team (APHIS), Castleton, N.Y., **Richard Chipman**, Group Leader; under subcategory of "Response to Attack on the Pentagon:" the California Interagency Incident Management Team (FS), Bakersfield, Calif., **Steve Gage** (Kern County Fire Department), Group Leader; under subcategory of "Department of Agriculture Emergency Operations Center:" the Homeland Security Emergency Support Team (Departmental Administration), Washington, DC, **Clifford Oliver**, Group Leader; and the USDA Crisis Response Group (DA), Washington, DC, **Clifford Oliver**, Group Leader; under subcategory of "Homeland Emergency Response:" the Terrorism Response Group (DA), Washington, DC, **Priscilla Carey**, Group Leader. ■

## USDA Spotlights Its "Unsung Heroes"

by Ron Hall  
Office of Communications

**U**SDA recognized five individual employees as "Unsung Heroes" during its recent observance of Public Service Recognition Week.

According to **Otis Thompson**, executive director of the Organization of Professional Employees, U.S. Department of Agriculture (OPEDA) and retired USDA public affairs specialist, the purpose of the "Unsung Hero" designation is to identify those employees who have been "unusually dedicated and efficient and had a positive attitude."

He noted that nominees as "Unsung Heroes" are based on actual "hands-on" activities rather than on supervisory or managerial efforts. "However," he added, "all USDA employees were eligible to be nominated."

The idea for an "Unsung Heroes" contest was developed in late 1987 by a group of six representatives of professional organizations in the Department. In addition to OPEDA, current sponsoring groups include the Association of Technical & Supervisory Professionals, USDA's Employee Services & Recreation Association, the National Association of Federal Veterinarians, and the USDA Chapter of the Senior Executive Association.

*This is the 15th year of the contest, which was conducted USDA-wide. Thompson said that following a Departmentwide solicitation, 30 employees were nominated, either by fellow USDA employees or by customers of USDA programs and services. The final selection was made in April by a team of USDA officials.*



### USDA's "Unsung Heroes" for 2002 include:

① **Ted Currier**, a supervisory tractor operator with the Agricultural Research Service's Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC) in Beltsville, Md., who has the lead responsibility for BARC's "Harvest for the Hungry" program. He works with non-profit organizations in the Washington, DC metropolitan area and ensures that surpluses of the fresh produce and other various crops—grown at BARC—are sent to feed area homeless persons. He also works with volunteer organizations who provide help in harvesting those surplus crops, and when volunteers arrive on-site, he speaks to them about ARS's research program and the importance of the

work at BARC. Prior to this initiative, the crops were disposed of through composting.

② **Louise "Lou" Hankins**, a nutritionist stationed with the Food and Nutrition Service's Field Office in Oklahoma City, for helping to plan and host a three-day "Train-The-Trainer" Food Safety-Nutrition Education Workshop, held in

death in her family, she nonetheless took care of her responsibilities for processing the Division's Time & Attendance sheets—without telling any of her colleagues about her loss—and only upon its completion did she then take appropriate annual leave.

③ **Grace Kerzman**, a program technician with the Farm Service Agency's county office in Garrison, N.D., for her performance in carrying out her responsibilities for all Production Flexibility Program duties in FSA's McLean County, N.D. Office, as well as for taking on the added responsibilities of four additional crop disaster programs in the county. McLean County is the third largest one in the state, and for her to assume those added responsibilities reflected her commitment to FSA and its programs.

④ **Keith Tidball**, an international affairs specialist with the Foreign Agricultural Service in Washington, DC, for his work in developing, organizing, and implementing FAS's "TEACH US" (Teaching Educators Agriculture and Conservation Holistically for Urban Society) Program, which enables teachers in urban elementary, middle, and high schools to travel internationally and expand their knowledge about sustainable agricultural practices. He recognizes the important role those teachers play in forming positive attitudes about agriculture and the environment among minority students. Through this program, teachers were able to travel to South Africa, China, and Ireland, with financial support from FAS, during 2001. ■

Shawnee, Okla. Fifty Native Americans, representing 19 FNS Food Distribution Programs administered by Native American Tribes located in Oklahoma and New Mexico, attended the workshop. She ensured that all aspects of the conference were ethnically and culturally accurate for the participants.

⑤ **Donna Howdershelt**, a secretary in the Electric Staff Division with the Rural Utilities Service at the agency's headquarters office in Washington, DC, for her exceptional reliability, ability to accomplish the task at hand, and service as a steady resource that others go to for her institutional memory and automated systems expertise. As an example of her exceptional reliability, immediately following a

## Some Of Our Recent USDA Initiatives

- **USDA Provides Wildlife Habitat Recovery Help for Lands Damaged by Drought and Fire** (USDA News Release No. 0307)
- **Veneman Convenes Working Group to Guide Establishment of New Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights** (No. 0305)
- **USDA, DOI, and DOL Sign Agreement for First-Ever Interagency Fire Apprentice Training Program** (No. 0260)

- **USDA Begins Hiring 1,000 New Staff to Aid with Farm Bill Implementation** (No. 0237)

- **USDA Commits Historic Resources to Conservation on Private Working Lands** (No. 0225)

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** For more detail, go to USDA's News Releases, by clicking onto USDA's Web site at [www.usda.gov/newsroom.html](http://www.usda.gov/newsroom.html)

# Editor's Roundup *USDA's people in the news*



**Mack Gray** was named deputy under secretary for natural resources and

environment, responsible for policy related to the programs of the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

From January 2001 until his appointment to this position Gray served as acting deputy under secretary for natural resources and environment. Before rejoining USDA, he had been retired, since June 1991, following 35 years with USDA's Soil Conservation Service, the predecessor agency to NRCS. From December 1990 until his retirement he had served as the agency's associate chief. The March

1991 issue of the **USDA News** carried his complete biographical sketch, following his selection to that position.

Gray served as acting chief of SCS from July to December 1990. During his career with the agency he also worked in such positions as assistant to the chief for strategic planning and budget analysis, director of congressional and public liaison, director of the agency's Economics Division, a program analyst, a district conservationist in Brownfield, Texas, and a soil conservationist in Levelland and Kenedy, Texas.

A native of Holland, Texas, where he grew up on a dairy farm, Gray holds a B.S. degree in agricultural education as well as an M.S. degree and a Ph.D. degree, both in agricultural economics—all from Texas A&M University.

**Glenda Humiston**, the previous deputy under secretary for natural resources and environment, held that position from July 1998 until January 2001, and now resides in Sonoma County, Calif., as director of government relations for the Agnosco Institute, a California-based nonprofit collaboration of groups which make access to information concerning sustainable agriculture more affordable and usable to family farmers and non-governmental organizations around the world. ■



**Gilbert Gonzalez** was appointed deputy under secretary for rural development, con-

centrating on policy and planning.

Gonzalez was active in banking, housing, and economic development efforts in Texas from 1984 until his appointment to this position. He was founding president of the Community Development Loan Fund, Inc. (CDLF), a for-profit multi-bank community development corporation created in 1993 which represented a collaborative effort between the City of San Antonio, Texas and 21 banks. It serves the credit needs of small, minority-owned, and women-owned businesses in San Antonio and surrounding counties. In 1997 he formed the Community Development Loan Corporation (CDLC), a nonprofit affiliate to complement the lending efforts of the CDLF and diversify its funding base. He was responsible for managing the day-to-

## PROFILE PLUS *More About: Elsa Murano*



**Elsa Murano**, now undersecretary for food safety, was 14 years of age before she learned to speak English. A native of Cuba, in 1961 Murano and her family were forced to emigrate to the island of Curacao with nothing but the clothes they were wearing.

Still, she says they were more fortunate than others caught up in **Fidel Castro's** takeover of Cuban businesses. Murano's father was an employee of IBM. "He had a job drawing a salary immediately, unlike people who had to go to Miami with nothing," she said.

From Cuba, the family settled into a routine, moving from one Latin American IBM office to the next, until being transferred to Florida when Murano was 14. "That's when I learned English," she said.

After high school Murano made a series of decisions about her education that wound up making her Secretary **Ann M. Veneman's** logical choice for USDA's top food safety officer (the Sept.-Dec. 2001 issue of the **USDA News** carried her complete biographical sketch, following her swearing-in to that position). A microbiologist with undergraduate and graduate degrees, the pinnacle of her education was earning a Ph.D. degree in food safety from Virginia Tech University in Blacksburg.

"It was actually my husband **Peter's** suggestion that I focus on food safety," Murano said. A fortuitous plan, since she was able to go from being a doctoral student to a professorship at Iowa State University almost immediately after graduation. After a five year stint there, she moved on to Texas A&M University, where she was a professor of animal science and held numerous other positions dealing with food safety.

How does the new job compare with the old? "As a researcher and a scientist at a university, there is only so much you can do that will make a difference. You publish a lot of papers and get grant money and teach the students, all of which has its own reward. But you get to a point where you feel isolated from real life and what is really going to impact people.

"Here—that is the exciting part about this job—you know you are making a difference protecting the public health."

Murano said she's come to appreciate two things: "You have to be cognizant of doing the right thing that is supported by science and is the right policy for that reason, but also you must know how to communicate what has happened so the message doesn't get lost."

Secondly, Murano has been surprised and pleased with the dedication of career employees. "I see people drop everything they are doing to respond to whatever is the crisis of the moment or to a request—and do it very willingly and stay as late as they need to and work weekends.

"Within the Food Safety and Inspection Service there is a degree of awareness among career employees, by and large, that we have a higher calling, if you will, of protecting the public's health and people take it very seriously," she said.

**Proudest Moment On The Job:** Becoming an official FSIS

Compliance Officer, USDA Badge Number 101

**Last Book Read:** "*The 21 Most Powerful Minutes in a Leader's Day*" by **John Maxwell**

**Hobbies:** Playing acoustic guitar, astronomy (the telescope was left behind in Texas)

**Favorite Food:** Spaghetti and meatballs; hot dogs

**Last Movie Seen:** "*Attack of the Clones*"

**Favorite Weekend Breakfast:** Grandma's special: two eggs over-easy, bacon, toast, and grits

**Favorite TV Shows:** "*Alias*" and "*Spongebob Squarepants*"

**Priorities In The Months Ahead:** "I have five goals: improving agency management so we can implement our programs effectively and efficiently; utilizing science to make all our policy decisions; protecting the food supply against bioterrorist acts; consumer education on food safety; and last but not least, improving communication and coordination with sister agencies not only within USDA but outside—with the Food and Drug Administration, for example."

—PATRICIA KLINTBERG

day operations of the CDLF and the CDLC.

From 1992-93 Gonzalez worked as a commercial loan officer, specializing in Small Business Administration lending, for the Money Store Investment Corporation in San Antonio. He was a business development specialist for the University of Texas Small Business Development Center, based in San Antonio, from 1990-92, after having served as an assistant vice president of budgeting and finance for First Gibraltar Bank in San Antonio from 1984-90.

A native of San Antonio, Gonzalez holds a Bachelor of Business Administration degree, specializing in accounting, from the University of Texas at San Antonio.

**Art Campbell**, the previous deputy under secretary for rural development, held that position from July 1995 until August 2000, and is now vice president for economic development with the Federal Home Loan Bank of Atlanta. ■



**B**ruce Knight was selected as chief of the Natural Resources

Conservation Service.

Before joining USDA, from 1996 until he began serving as chief of NRCS in May 2002, Knight was vice president for public policy with the National Corn Growers Association (NCGA), based in its Washington, DC office. NCGA is a producer-directed trade association representing U.S. corn growers.

Knight worked as a legislative assistant for [then] U.S. Sen. **Bob Dole** (R-Kan.) from 1995-96, where he focused on development of the conservation title of the 1996 Farm Bill. He was director of governmental affairs with the National Association of Wheat Growers, in its Washington, DC office, from 1989-95. From 1987-88 he was a legislative assistant to [then] U.S. Rep.

**Fred Grandy** (R-Iowa), after having been a legislative assistant to [then] U.S. Sen. **James Abdnor** (R-S.D.) during 1985, working on the 1985 Farm Bill.

Since 1976 Knight has been a farmer and rancher in Gann Valley, S.D., running a diversified grain and cattle operation using no-till and rest rotation grazing systems. That farm is near the family farm in Gann Valley on which he was raised. He attended South Dakota State University, where he studied agriculture.

**Pearlie Reed**, the previous chief of NRCS, served in that position from March 1998 until May 2002 and is now the regional conservationist for NRCS's West Region, which is based in Davis, Calif. ■



**S**ummertime in televisionland is often a time to experiment with new TV shows, giving them a

trial run in the hope they can catch on—ala “Survivor”—for a more permanent spot in the fall schedule. **Jim Lucas** likes that game plan—because he is part of such a summer show.

Lucas, an assistant to the administrator of the Farm Service Agency and director of FSA's Service Center Implementation Team, appeared in an episode of “The Wire,” a new series on HBO airing on Sunday nights and then repeating several times on following weeks. He played the role of a judge or “juvenile master” in episode six, titled “And All The Pieces Matter,” in the 13-episode series. That episode aired for the first time on July 7.

Lucas explained that production of the summer series—which is a drama about law enforcers and the criminal element as they attempt to stay one step ahead of each other during a number of narcotics and homicide investigations—began in late February and was shot entirely in the area of Baltimore, Md.

He said that a friend, who had already gotten a part in the show as a police officer, told him about the mini-series. So, after finding out who was handling the show's casting, Lucas sent in a head shot and a bio sketch. “To my surprise,” he recounted, “I got a call to audition for the role of a judge.”

He did what is called a “cold read” of dialogue, on camera, in

front of the casting director and an assistant. “This is where they determine if they want to use you or not,” Lucas explained. If a would-be actor makes it through that reading, then the next step is a “call back,” which is a second reading—of the same lines of dialogue—in front of the casting director again, as well as the producer and director.

“I'm told that most actors audition 10 to 12 times before being selected,” Lucas observed. This was his first auditioning for HBO—and he got the job after those two readings. “I guess,” he quipped, “they were desperate.”

Lucas described “the shoot” as “most interesting.” The show's production company first faxed him a copy of the six-page script, which he had to commit to memory. Then, on the day of the shooting, his first stop was to go to “base camp” which contains all the production equipment, including wardrobe, catering, crew equipment, and trailers for both actors and make-up artists.

“I took annual leave that day and arrived at the base camp at about 2 p.m.,” he said. “At ‘wardrobe’s’ request I brought some of my own suits with me to wear underneath the judge's robe they fitted me with—even though in the end we didn't use the robe at all.” He then settled into his own individual actor's trailer, where he had several hours to review his lines, take a nap, and otherwise chill out until the cast members moved to a dining area and ate dinner together.

“Then,” he advised, “I was limo'd back to my trailer where I waited another hour until it was time to go to makeup—and then go make a shoot.”

The scene in which Lucas participated was shot in the Baltimore County Courthouse, eight blocks away from “base camp.” “We had to wait until all the county workers had gone home before we could start to shoot,” he explained. It took the production crew about two hours, until 8 p.m., to get the shots set up correctly. Then each actor did one rehearsal before taping.

“You may not realize,” Lucas pointed out, “that typically an actor does his or her lines a minimum of three times, since production requires a long shot, a wide shot, and a

close-up of most lines of dialogue in a script. Then the editors decide later what is actually used—and seen—in the final product.”

Lucas's part consisted of nine lines, in which he had to decide the sentencing of a juvenile charged with some minor offenses. “So my demeanor had to be very serious, I had to listen intently to both the prosecution and defense, and then had to render a solemn and wise decision from the bench,” he said. “And,” he then laughed, “you bet I did!”

**Judge Judy**, eat your heart out...■

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*"The ice cream is a nice reward, and, as this exhibit points out, I think we employees are 'making a world of difference' here at USDA," notes **Demetria James** (2nd from right), a bindery equipment operator with the Office of Operations at the USDA Printing Plant in Washington, DC. Her colleagues—with ice cream bars in hand—bindery helper **Sebastian Wiggins**, bindery equipment operator **Kim Deal**, and document technician **Randy Spencer** (L to R) seem to agree. This ice cream social was held on June 14 on the Patio of the Whitten Building at USDA headquarters in Washington, DC. **Betty Waters**, special assistant to the director of OHRM, coordinated the event. She said it was intended to give USDA's senior executives the opportunity to show their appreciation for the Department's employees, as well as give employees the chance to celebrate their roles as public servants.— **PHOTO BY BOB NICHOLS***



## Help Us Find **Matthew Diaz-Lebreton**

Missing: **4-24-2001** From: **Homosassa, FL**  
D.O.B. **4-26-1999** Sex: **Male**  
Hair: **Brown** Eyes: **Hazel**  
Height: **2 ft.6 in.** Weight: **50 lbs.**

*If you have information, please call*  
**1-800-843-5678**

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(202) 401-4385 or 1-800-877-8339 (TTY)

### ■ September 18-20

#### *National Food Safety Education*

*Conference*  
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